



CHATEAU MONTELENA

ESTABLISHED 1882

2015 Napa Valley Chardonnay

Notes from the Winemaker, Matt Crafton, September 2017

INTRODUCTION

Growing Chardonnay during the 2015 vintage perfectly illustrates the importance of patience. I have no idea if Rousseau was thinking of vineyards and wine when he remarked that “patience is bitter, but its fruits are sweet.” Even if that wasn’t the case, his quip couldn’t be more applicable as we reflect on a growing season that was simultaneously challenging but also incredibly rewarding. As temperatures rose in August, and the temptation to panic began to grip many growers in the Valley, we recognized an amazing opportunity to pivot and embrace the ripe, tropical character that would slowly creep into our Chardonnay with some judicious hangtime, careful farming, and utmost patience. Foremost in our minds though, remained the need to balance these incredible aromas and flavors with the vibrant acidity that makes our Chardonnay ageable. While I wouldn’t say our scheme wasn’t without risk, the result of our composure, grit, and a little bit of luck is nothing short of rich and delicious.

VINTAGE WEATHER

Despite some early, sizable winter storms, the beginning of the 2015 growing season turned mild and dry prompting early budbreak in the vineyards. A light crop, resulting from a rather blustery April and May, soaked up the sun during a picture perfect Napa Valley summer. Harvesting began in mid-August as the temperatures began to warm and dry-breezes from the desert pressed us into action.

NOSE

The ripeness of the vintage is readily apparent as pineapple and stone fruit burst from the glass during the first pour. Fresh melon, along with cinnamon, nutmeg and myriad of baking spices follow suit as the wine begins to warm and its aromatic opulence comes into focus.

PALATE

While the toasty barrel character sets the stage for richness and depth, take the time to enjoy the beautiful interplay between the crisp, fresh orange zest and ginger notes and how they interact with the creaminess and texture from sur lees aging.

FINISH

The texture of the midpalate seamlessly overlays the dense, concentrated finish, punctuated by baked apple, vanilla, and a hint of white pepper.

Technical Information

HARVEST DATES

August 19 – September 8

ALCOHOL

13.6%

BLEND

100% Chardonnay

BARREL AGING

10 months in French Oak

BOTTLING DATE

July 22 – August 1, 2016

RELEASE DATE

Fall 2017

WINEMAKER

Matt Crafton